DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

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WEHRMACHT COMING

FREE ELECTIONS

By East German State Secretary Otto Winzer

We want free elections in the whole of Germany, but they must be held under conditions which guarantee that they are genuinely free elections.

It is impossible, for instance, to describe the last elections in West Germany as really free, since Adenauer was financed by a grant of 40 million marks donated by big-business, arms kings and big landowners.

We want free elections, but they must be elections in which the banks, trusts and monopolies are prevented from purchasing political power.

We want free elections, but they must be free of fascist and militarist organisations which terrorise the electors.

We want free elections, but they must be held under conditions which guarantee that no Gestapo officials and nazi judges are free to fling class-conscious workers and honest German patriots into prison.

We want free elections, but they must be elections in which it is impossible for reactionary clergy, who blessed Hitler's rise to power, to exert pressure upon church-going voters.

We want free elections, but it must be made impossible for big-business men to sack class-conscious workers who carry on election propaganda in the factories.

We want free elections, but they must be free of all forms of foreign intervention.

When we have created these conditions, then it will be possible to hold really free elections in the whole of Germany for the first time.

(From a speech entitled "Let Us Make Berlin a City of Peace" which State Secretary Winzer was scheduled to deliver at a public meeting in West Berlin on January 12th. The meeting was banned by West Berlin police.)

Conscription Soon in W. Germany

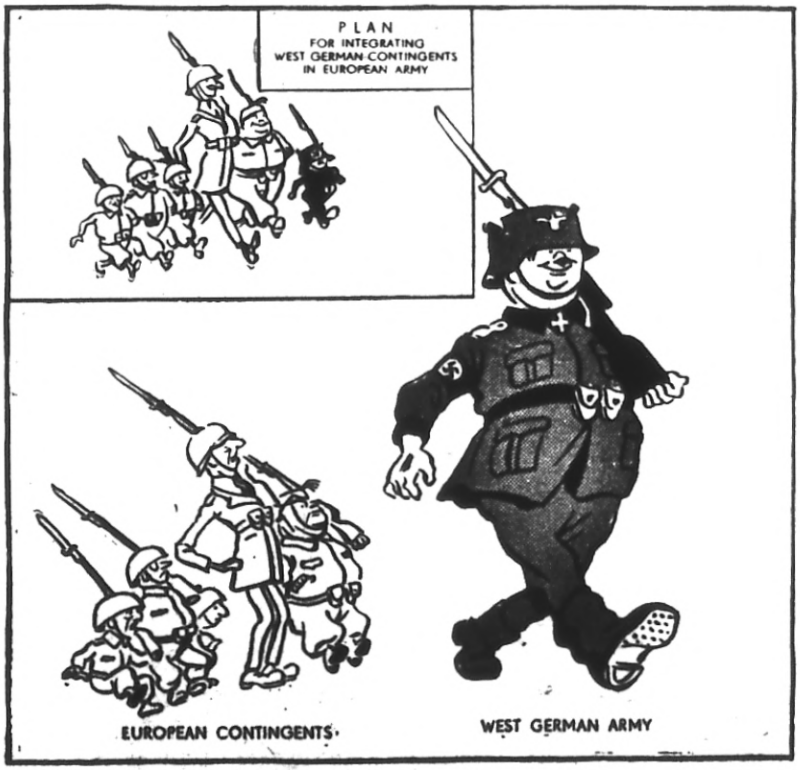
The West German Parliament prepared for the call-up of a new Wehrmacht by holding, on January 14th, the first reading of a constitutional amendment which would legalise the raising of armed forces.

The constitutional amendment consists mainly of the addition of a paragraph to Article 32 of the Bonn Constitution. The new paragraph states:

"The defence of the Federal Republic is a Federal responsibility . . . Conscription can be introduced by Federal law . . . The constitutional rights of members of the armed forces may be curtailed if defence requirements so demand."

Article 60 will be adapted so that the Federal President can appoint officers to the armed forces: Article 73 will be extended to give the Federal Government full authority over military matters; and Article 87 will be changed to provide for the Wehrmacht administration.

The amendment bill was referred to committee, against the votes of the Social Democratic opposition, who objected that the introduction of the bill at this moment might prejudice the forthcoming Berlin Conference.



Who Integrates Whom?

GERMANY: 1945–1954

Important Dates in Post-War History

1945

May 8th: Hostilities in Europe cease at 23.01 Central European Time, after German military leaders Keitel, Stumpff and Friedeburg signed unconditional surrender.

May 19th: Antifascists form Berlin Municipal Administration with slogan "Antifascists will guarantee rebirth of the German people."

June 5th: Four-Power Allied Control Council, with seat in Berlin, takes over supreme power throughout Germany.

June 10th: Soviet Military Administration permits formation of German democratic parties and trade unions aimed at "finally liquidating fascism, stabilising democracy."

July 11th: Inter-Allied Military Commandatura takes over control of the whole of Berlin.

July 23rd: Soviet Military Administration orders nationalisation of banking and insurance in East Germany.

August 2nd: Stalin, Truman and Attlee sign Potsdam Agreement, pledging extirpation of militarism and nazism; reconstruction of German political life on democratic basis; destruction of cartels, and other industrial monopolies; treatment of Germany as single economic unit; Oder-Neisse line as Germany's eastern frontier; transfer to Germany of German minorities in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

September 3rd: East German land reform. Estates exceeding 250 acres split amongst poor farmers and agricultural labourers.

October 30th: Order No. 124 issued by Soviet Military Administration clears way for nationalisation of factories belonging to active nazis and to war criminals.

1946

April 22nd: East German Communist Party and Social Democratic Parties combine in Berlin to form Socialist Unity Party, and demand the formation of indivisible free German Republic.

June 30th: **Referendum in Saxony, East Germany, results in majority of 77.7% for proposal to nationalise property of active nazis and war criminals. Nationalisation measures decided in other East German provinces in course of July and August 1946, with the result that most heavy industry is taken over from former nazi owners.**

July 12th: Conference of Four Foreign Ministers in Paris ends without result after western representatives evade Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's proposal for formation of united Germany and conclusion of peace treaty.

September 5th: British and U. S. Military Governors sign agreement on formation of Bi-zone, economic unit comprising British and U. S. occupation zones.

September 12th: Establishment at Minden, British Zone, of the Bizonal Economic Council, fore-runner of the West German Federal Government.

October 16th: Twelve leading nazi war criminals executed at Nuremberg.

1947

April 24th: End of Foreign Ministers' Conference in Moscow. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov proposes land reform and nationalisation of industrial monopolies throughout Germany; he urges the conclusion of peace treaty with united Germany, not imposition of treaty upon Germany without consultation.

June 6th: German Economic Commission, with extended powers for German department heads, established in Soviet Zone.

June 9th: Prime Ministers of all German provinces in all four occupation zones meet in Munich. Conference breaks up when western prime ministers, on American orders, refuse to discuss formation of All-German Government.

July 30th: Western representatives in Control Council refuse to receive Soviet Zone provincial prime ministers who wish to present programme calling for German central administration, all-German land reform, exclusion of nazis from posts of economic responsibility.

August 26th: Western Commandants in Berlin Commandatura veto nationalisation of industry bill passed by Berlin Municipality.

September 11th: Land reform practically completed in Soviet Zone; big estates broken up, providing farms for 500,000 landless farmers and agricultural workers.

November 21st: Soviet Military Governer Marshal Sokolovsky discloses at Control Council meeting that western powers had "made practically no progress" in demilitarising West Germany "The sabotage of demilitarisation and the preservation of war potential in the British and American Zones can only have the purpose of converting these zones into an Anglo-American military base in the heart of Europe."

November 26th: Soviet Zone parties issue call for all-German People's Congress for unity and peace.

December 6th: People's Congress, meeting in Berlin, elects delegation to present German viewpoint at London Foreign Ministers' Conference. British authorities refuse visas.

December 15th: End of London Foreign Ministers' Conference, at which Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov proposes immediate creation of democratic German government which could sign proposed peace treaty.

1948

March 3rd: End of conference in London between three western powers and Benelux states on West Germany, particularly its inclusion in Marshall Plan. Soviet Union not invited.

March 20th: Marshal Sokolovsky protests in Control Council against London Conference (see March 3rd above) which had "torn up the agreement on control machinery in Germany ... By their actions the (western representatives) confirm that the Control Council no longer exists as supreme authority in Germany." Control Council meetings not resumed.

June 2nd: Three western powers and Benelux countries meeting in London approve establishment of separate West German state.

June 20th: Separate currency reform in West Germany, without previous consultation with Soviet authorities, who immediately close zonal borders to prevent East Germany being flooded with devalued Reichsmarks.

June 23rd: Currency reform in East Germany

June 24th: East European Foreign Ministers meet in Warsaw, call for all-German Government, conclusion of peace treaty, and withdrawal of all occupation troops from Germany within one year of treaty signing.

November 11th: New East Berlin administration formed under Lord Mayor Friedrich Ebert after separatist administration under U. S. influence has been established for western sectors.

1949

May 16th: Elections to People's Congress in East Germany. 66% of voters support joint list of candidates proposed by Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Socialist Unity Party and other groups.

May 12th: Traffic restrictions between West Germany and West Berlin, in force since currency reform in June 1948, brought to an end by Four Power agreement.

July 2nd: Paris meeting of Foreign Ministers ends. Soviet Foreign Minister Vishinsky urges central German administration and speedy conclusion of peace treaty. Western foreign ministers propose that proposed western constitution be extended to all Germany, and occupation be prolonged.

September 7th: **West German separate state founded in Bonn. Konrad Adenauer Chancellor.**

October 7th: **German Democratic Republic formed in Berlin. German People's Council reconstituted as Provisional People's Chamber. Otto Grotewohl Prime Minister.**

October 13th: Stalin's telegram greeting German Democratic Republic as "turning point in the history of Europe".

November 22nd: **Adenauer signs "Petersberg Agreement" with western High Commissioners, with secret clause on the formation of new West German Wehrmacht.**

1950

May 5th: Soviet Union halves reparations payments still to be made by East Germany.

July 7th: Prime Ministers of Poland and German Democratic Republic sign treaty on final delimitation of Polish-German frontier on Oder-Neisse line.

July 24th: Socialist Unity Party Congress in Berlin decides on Five Year Plan (1951—55) for German Democratic Republic.

September 18th: **Three western foreign ministers, meeting in New York, propose "West German participation in an integrated force for the defence of European freedom" — in effect the revival of the Wehrmacht.**

The Potsdam Agreement

"German militarism and nazism will be extirpated and the allies will take in agreement together, now and in the future, the other measures necessary to ensure that Germany never again will threaten her neighbours or the peace of the world ...

"At the earliest practicable date the German economy shall be decentralised for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements ...

"During the period of occupation Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit ..."

Signed in Potsdam on August 2nd, 1945, by Stalin, Truman, Attlee.

October 15th: General elections in German Democratic Republic. Overwhelming majority for candidates of National Front, representing all democratic parties.

October 21th: Prague meeting of East European Foreign Ministers, including German Democratic Republic, demands return to principles of Potsdam Declaration, formation of all-German Constituent Assembly on basis of parity, peace treaty with a united Germany.

October 26th: West German War Ministry formed in Bonn under camouflage name "Office for Accomodation of Occupation Troops."

November 30th: Grotewohl writes to Adenauer proposing direct discussion to form All-German Constituent Council.

1951

January 15th: Adenauer replies to Grotewohl's offer, posing conditions.

January 20th: East German People's Chamber offers to discuss free elections, People's Police, and other matters at issue with West German Parliament. This offer repeated many times during 1951, 1952 and 1953, always rejected or left unanswered by West German authorities.

June 21st: Meeting of Four Deputy Foreign Ministers in Paris breaks down after Western representatives decline Soviet proposal to discuss demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany.

August 5th: World Youth Festival in Berlin.

December 11th: East German representatives tell United Nations Political Committee in Paris that All German elections are internal affair of German people and reject suggestion for U. N. Investigation Commission.

1952

February 24th: North Atlantic Pact Conference in Lisbon includes West Germany in "North Atlantic Block".

February 26th: West German Government approves monthly contribution of 850 million marks to "European Army".

March 10th: Soviet Union submits draft peace treaty with Germany to Western Powers.

March 13th: West German State Secretary Hallstein demands in Washington "Integration of Europe up to the Urals".

May 26th, 27th: Adenauer signs Bonn and Paris treaties, prolonging western occupation for 50 years and pledging formation of new West German Wehrmacht.

October 1st: General Chuikov, Chairman of Soviet Control Commission, demands that western powers close terrorist centres in West Berlin.

1953

March 3rd: West German Parliament ratifies Bonn and Paris Treaties.

June 11th: East German Government decides on "new course" aimed at improving standard of living of workers, peasants and middle class; and other measures designed to facilitate achievement of German unity.

June 17th: Fascist provocateurs and foreign agents provoke riots, commit arson in Berlin and other East German cities in attempt to upset government's "new course".

August 22nd: Negotiations in Moscow between East Germany and Soviet Union result in cancellation of further reparations payments, reduction of occupation costs to 5% of budget, other far-reaching modifications.

September 6th: West German general elections strengthen right wing in Bonn parliament; many former nazis and militarists elected.

September 7th: Adenauer declares in Bonn: "Time has come to speak not of reunification of Germany, but of liberation of East Zone".

October 9th: Adenauer forms new West German cabinet containing two former SS officers and two SA officers.

October 24th: 14th and biggest price reduction since 1948 in East Germany.

November 22nd: East German Government proposes to West German Government ending of reparations and reduction of occupation costs similar to those carried out in East.

November 25th: East German Government announces once again its readiness to confer with West Germany on all problems to lead to peaceful solution of German problem, particularly interzonal trade, strength of police, all-German ban on militarist literature.

1954

January 1st: After exchange of notes lasting nearly two years, Britain, France and U. S. finally agree to holding of Foreign Ministers' Conference in Berlin on January 25th.

DRAFT PEACE TREATY FOR GERMANY

Terms Suggested By Soviet Union

The draft proposals for a peace treaty with Germany, made by the Soviet Union on March 10th 1952 stated:

Participants

Great Britain, the Soviet Union, U.S.A., France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and the other states whose armed forces took part in the war against Germany.

Political Principles

1. Germany will be restored as a united state. This will bring to an end the partitioning of Germany, and will give united Germany the opportunity to develop as an independent, democratic, peace-loving state.

2. All armed forces of the occupation powers must be withdrawn from Germany at the latest one year after a peace treaty with Germany comes into force. At the same time all foreign military bases on German territory will be liquidated.

3. The German people must be guaranteed democratic rights, so that all persons subject to German law, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, shall enjoy the human rights and the fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to practice their religion freely, freedom of political conviction, and the right of assembly.

4. Democratic parties and organisations in Germany must be guaranteed freedom of activity; they must have the right to decide freely on their internal affairs, to hold conferences and meetings, and they must enjoy the freedom of the press and publication.

5. Organisations opposed to democracy and the cause of the maintenance of peace will not be allowed to exist on German territory.

6. All former members of the German army, including the officers and generals, and all former nazis with the exception of those serving a sentence for crimes which they have committed, must be ensured the same civil and political rights as all other German citizens to participate in the contruction of a peace-loving democratic Germany.

7. Germany guarantees to enter into no coalition or military alliance directed against any state whose armed forces took part in the war against Germany.

Territory

The territory of Germany is governed by the decisions taken by the Potsdam Conference of the Great Powers.

(Territorial clauses of the Potsdam Agreement laid down that the Oder-Neisse line should form the German-Polish frontier, and that the former territory of East Prussia should be included in the Soviet Union and Poland. Ed.)

Economic Principles

No limitations will be laid upon the development of Germany's peace economy, which should serve to increase the prosperity of the German people. No limitations will be imposed on trade with other countries, merchant shipping, and entry to the world market.

Military Principles

1. Germany will be allowed to possess its own national armed forces (land, air and sea forces), necessary for the defence of the country.

2. Germany will be allowed to produce war material and equipment in quantities not exceeding those needed by the armed forces laid down for Germany in the peace treaty.

Germany and the United Nations Organisation

The states which conclude the peace treaty with Germany will support Germany's application for membership of the United Nations Organisation.

INNOCENT ABROAD IN

Beginner's Baedeker to West Berlin

West Berlin, comprising the British, French and U. S. Sectors has the same currency and in the main the same laws as the West German Federal Republic, but does not form part of it. Since the formation of the separatist West Berlin administration in 1948, which cut the western part of the city off from the surrounding countryside, there has been a chronic economic crisis in the western sectors. The West Berlin administration, which persecutes progressives and the peace movement, and fosters militarism, is headed by Christian Democrat Dr Walter Schreiber. Population approximately two million. Fifty-two different Western Allied and German spy and terrorist organisations have been counted in this part of the city.

Visitors to West Berlin will want to visit the leading terrorist organisations, employed on espionage and the attempt to launch a new world war.

At 2 Ernst Ring Strasse (S-Bahn Station Nikolassee) they will find the headquarters of the **"Fighting Group Against Inhumanity"**. Mr Ernst Tillich, head of the group, is always pleased to tell of the activities of his members (at least 50 are serving sentences in East Germany for attempted murder, arson and other crimes), and to show the large dollar cheques received from the Ford Foundation in the United States. Ask Mr Tillich for an introduction to the head of his **Laboratory** at 106 Kurfuerstendamm (S-Bahn St. Halensee), where there is always a plentiful supply of small bombs, incendiary cartridges, etc.

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Visiting foreign journalists are always welcomed by the **"Investigating Committee of Free Jurists"** at 29 Lima Strasse (S-Bahn St. Zehlendorf West), as long as they can prove they are staunchly "anti-eastern". Here is a recommendation from a previous interested visitor to this espionage centre: "... a hive of Teutonic efficiency ... a massive card index giving details of the private and public lives of all the German Communist officials." (New Statesman and Nation, London, July 19th 1952).

✠

Visitors more interested in the work of a U. S. Intelligence Agency should call at the **"Cloak and Dagger Branch" of U. S. Naval Intelligence,** situated at 10 Rohlf Strasse (U-Bahn St. Podbielski Allee). Ask for Herr Oskar Stebel, former high-ranking nazi propagandist and later Hitlerite counter-espionage agent.

British visitors should not fail to call on the charming nazi Major Karl Edmund Gartenfeld, of the **"German Intelligence Service"** who runs a garage at 14 Bendler Strasse (U-Bahn St. Nollendorf Platz). His training in smuggling nazi agents into Britain during World War Two was good preparation for his work of smuggling spies and saboteurs into East Germany today. He is an agent of the West German military intelligence service headed by General Gustav von Gehlen, former chief of the Eastern Intelligence Department of the nazi General Staff.

✠

N. B. If any of the organisations named above are no longer functioning at the addresses given, visitors are recommanded to direct their enquiries to U. S. Colonel Conger, alias Gartner, at 170 Clay Allee (U-Bahn Oskar Helene Heim), the headquarters of the Berlin branch of the **U. S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA),** *the body which coordinates the work of the various spy and terror groups. An introduction from John Foster Dulles will be useful here, since his brother, Allen Dulles, heads the Washington H. Q. of the CIA.*

✠

The main Unemployment Office at 280 Sonnen Allee (S-Bahn St. Sonnenallee) where a considerable proportion of West Berlin's 300,000 unemployed draw their weekly dole, should not be missed. Visitors can be sure of interesting answers if they ask anyone in the queues there what they think of the system of free enterprise.

✠

West Berlin Police Headquarters, at 15 Friesen Strasse (U-Bahn St. Flughafen), are not imposing from outside, but interested visitors can easily obtain admission by standing on the street corner and saying loudly "Peace is wonderful", or "Down with Hitler". They will then be escorted into the building, and given a chance to study West Berlin justice from the inside while charges of "anti-democratic behaviour" and "action likely to cause a breach of the peace" are prepared against them.

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If you visit the **West Berlin City Hall** (U-Bahn St. Rathaus Schoeneberg), make a point of asking for Carl Hubert Schwennicke, Chairman of the Free Democratic Party, one of the parties in the West Berlin Government coalition. Only ten years ago, Schwennicke's title was "Abwehrbeauftragter der Geheimen Staatspolizei", which means "Security Agent of the Gestapo". If Herr Schwennicke is shy about talking of his past, the editorial offices of GERMAN REPORT (for address and telephone number see foot of back page) will be glad to show you a photostatic copy of his war-time employment card in this capacity.

✠

Lovers of nature will of course visit Berlin's famous **Grunewald Forest.** Warning: stay well away from the U. S. shooting ranges and tank manoeuvre grounds which occupy a large part of the otherwise unspoilt forest.

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For relaxation visitors have the **Zoo Area** (S-Bahn and U-Bahn St. Zoo) which offers not only a large menagerie but also "every vice known since Greek and Roman times" (New York Herald Tribune, October 29th 1953).

On these two pages we give a list of things which visitors should see in the German capital. The nearest station of the elevated railway (S-Bahn), or underground railway (U-Bahn) is named for convenience. Both these railway systems run throughout both halves of Berlin, paying no regad to sector boundaries.

THE GERMAN CAPITAL

Beginner's Baedeker to East Berlin

The Democratic Sector of Berlin, formerly the Soviet Sector, has the same currency and basically the same laws as the German Democratic Republic. It is unique in geography in that it is the capital of the German Democratic Republic, but does not legally form part of the Republic.

The planned economy of the East German Government has ensured that there is no unemployment in the Democratic Sector, and new industrial development is constantly taking place. The administration is headed by Lord Mayor Friedrich Ebert, Socialist Unity Party.

Militarist and fascist activity or propaganda are banned, as throughout East Germany. The population is approximately one million.

East Berlin's great building project on the Stalin Allee (U-Bahn St. Strausberger Platz) is a must for all visitors to the Democratic Sector. Here some of Berlin's worst slums, wrecked in air-raids, have been cleared, largely by voluntary labour, and more than a mile of model housing erected. Readers of the big-business press who believe that the fine houses are only facades must visit the furnished apartments open to inspection (corner of Stalin Allee and Frucht Strasse, entry at 50 Frucht Strasse); if you believe that the apartments are allotted only to high officials, ring any doorbell at random, and the chances are you will find a factory worker living there.

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A visit should be paid to the **Karl Marx Bookshop,** on Stalin Allee between Koppen Strasse and Frucht Strasse; here you can find hundreds of good translations of British, French and American classics, as well as contemporary writers. No memoirs by nazi generals, though.

New housing projects are not confined to the Stalin Allee. For an average sample of other housing take elevated railway to Greifswalder Strasse Station, inspect the building activity on nearby Grell Strasse, Ostsee Strasse, Arnswalder Platz, where over 1000 new apartments are going up.

✱

From S-Bahn Station Alexander Platz, three minutes' walk brings us to the **Central Market Hall,** where thousands of East Berlin housewives do most of their shopping. Dozens of fruit and vegetable stalls, some state-owned, some cooperative, and some private, give shoppers the chance to compare prices and quality. The same applies to meat, groceries, fish and household articles, all of which are sold here.

Alexander Platz is also the site of the main **Department Store** of the State Trading Organisation (H. O.), offering everything from new motor cars to toothbrushes.

✱

Visitors interested in children and education should not miss the **Young Pioneers' Club House** at 25 Parkaue (S-Bahn and U-Bahn Stalin Allee) where young Berliners practice dozens of different hobbies in their spare time. The staff will be glad to show you round if you telephone in advance: 55-54-61 extension 230.

Nextdoor is **Friendship Theatre,** which is worth a visit even if you do not speak German. The fairy tales and other plays staged are good, and if you take a seat in one of the front rows, you can turn round and watch the young audience cheer the hero and hiss the villain, which is just as much fun as what goes on on the stage.

✱

East Berlin **Theatres** for adults are all within walking distance of Friedrich Strasse S-Bahn Station; for programmes see the East Berlin daily papers. Particularly recommended plays running this season (for visitors who know German): "Mutter Courage" by Bert Brecht, a really great anti-war play; "Othello" by Shakespeare; "Julius Fucik", about Czech anti-nazi underground; and "Der Teufelskreis", a dramatisation of the nazi Reichstag Fire Trial frame-up.

In the East Berlin cinemas, watch out for a revival of Marlene Dietrich in "The Blue Angel", German film classic of the early thirties.

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Morbidly minded visitors will like to take a quick look at the ruins of Hitler's Chancellory, on the Thaelmann Platz, opposite the East German Press Centre. The ruins should be a warning to anyone who has the impulse to set himself up as a new Hitler.

A few hundred yards further east, on the Unter den Linden is the famous **Berlin Opera House,** built in 1741 by Knobelsdorff. The Opera House was almost totally destroyed in an air raid, like so much of its surroundings; rebuilding work is now almost complete, and the reopening is fixed for 1954.

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Behind the Opera House is **St Hedwig's Cathedral,** also badly damaged in an air raid, now almost rebuilt with the help of 100,000 mark subsidy from the East German Government, and collections taken amongst Catholics in both East and West Germany. The dome has been reconstructed by a nationally owned building firm, by a completely new process using reinforced concrete segments.

✱

No visitor should miss the impressive **Soviet Memorial** in Treptow Park (S-Bahn Treptower Park), where thousands of Soviet soldiers, who lost their lives fighting to free Europe of fascism, are buried.

✱

Visitors shocked by the quantities of ruins still to be seen in Berlin can do two things:

1. Resolve to do all they can to prevent another war, with its senseless destruction;

2. Put in a voluntary shift or two, helping to clear away the rubble of the last war. Volunteer workers are always welcome at the rubble clearing site at the corner of Marsilius Strasse and Blumen Strasse (U-Bahn St. Strausberger Platz).

SPIKE THAT LIE!

British Clergyman does good job

On January 5th 1954 the "Times" London published a long article allegedly describing conditions in East Germany. The article was ascribed to "A young West German civilian lately in the Soviet Zone".

The Reverend Edward Charles, a clergyman of the Church of England, who visited East German in 1952, has provided us with a copy of a letter of protest which he sent to the "Times", but which that paper has not printed to date. We publish the letter below in full:

The Editor
"The Times"
London

Arlesey Vicarage
Bedfordshire
January 5th, 1954

Sir,

The author of your article of January 5th, "Poverty and Gloom in Eastern Germany", appears to me unfortunate alike in his observations and deductions.

The population "in a number of villages" he found "without anything unpolitical to read" as well as "without anything decent to eat". Not for them the many classics or even translations from the English published in Eastern Germany, which we Britishers could see last November in a West-end bookshop.

The article dwells repeatedly on an almost complete absence of cars. I was surprised by this, for not only did I see a fair number myself in the autumn of 1952, but I also remember having a good breakfast in a transport cafe alongside the autobahn between Berlin and Wittenberg: presumably the proprietor had found it worth while to lay in a stock of food for customers from cars and lorries.

Equally surprising is "the old, rattling bus in the square, drawn by four oxen", which "could not get up the hill by its own efforts". I have been lucky enough to travel in four continents, but never before have I seen or heard of an ox-drawn bus. Think of the speed of the vehicle. Would not an able-bodied person prefer to walk?

On housing we are given two contradictory statements. On the one hand, in Magdeburg, we read of "a new street of dwellings for party members" — how different from the scheme of allocation which was explained to me in East Berlin, which combined need and merit, with no reference to political affiliation. On the other hand we are told, without qualification, "there is no new building". How could any visitor to any country ever know enough to make a statement like that? Would this author, for instance, have heard of the new houses which I saw in a village some fifty miles from Berlin? These have been built, I was told, not only for those who lived and worked there before the war, many of whom had previously been housed in one large building by the land-owner, but also for a number of refugee families from what is now Polish Silesia.

I talked with the Evangelical churchwarden, who had been such a refugee but now had his own house and farm. And when I asked whether there were many in the district who wished to try to reconquer the territory East of the Oder-Neisse line, another former refugee told me, "Not those who have homes of their own".

Yours faithfully,
The Rev. Edward Charles

Soviet Amnesty

The Soviet Government has amnestied the major part of the Germans sentenced since the war by Soviet Military courts in Germany.

A total of 6143 persons have been released from the East German prisons in which they were serving their sentences, imposed for such crimes as mistrating slave labourers during the war, illegal possession of arms, and espionage.

"Ministry of Culture" in East Germany

The East German Government established a new "Ministry of Culture" on January 7th.

The new ministry, to be headed by poet Johannes R. Becher, Holder of the Stalin International Peace Prize, will have the task of encouraging all forms of humanist literature and art. Particular attention will be given to the development of good film art, cultural work in the factories, and the training and encouragement of young artists.

PROTESTS HALT WAR RALLY

A storm of protests from workers in East and West Berlin have forced the cancellation of a "National Foundation Rally" planned by the extreme right-wing militarist organisation "Stahlhelm" (Steel Helmet), planned to take place in West Berlin on January 17th.

War criminal Field Marshall Kesselring was originally billed to speak at the rally, which was to have been accompanied by a "Great Concert of Military Music".

In pre-Hitler Germany the Stahlhelm played a leading part in undermining the Weimar Republic, and after Hitler came to power in 1933 the para-military private army of the Stahlhelm was absorbed into the SS and the nazi storm troops.

"SECURITY MAIN PROBLEM"

— Prime Minister Grotewohl

World security is the main problem to be settled by the Berlin Conference, East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl stated on Sunday January 17th.

"The West German Government keeps repeating that 'all-German free elections' are the main problem for the Berlin Conference, but this is not true" Prime Minister Grotewohl stated.

"There can be no real security for Europe and the world so long as Germany is a centre of unrest, because it has no peace treaty and because it is torn into two parts, in one of which militarism and fascism as growing again.

From "L'Humanité", Paris

Women in East Germany

Over one quarter of all women working in industry in East Germany qualified as skilled workers during 1953, and in the building and woodworking industries 41% of the the women employed are in the skilled categories. The proportion is still rising. Equal pay for equal work is not only a principle, of course. It is a hard fact.

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In 1953 twice as many women went to study at Workers' and Peasants' Faculties at the universities in East Germany as in 1952. These faculties educate up to university standard young men and women who had to leave school at the age of 14, and have since been working in factories or on the land.

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Factories in East Germany now provide 1000 sewing rooms, where a special staff takes over the mending and darning work of women employees. 220 factories are also equipped with their own laundries.

TERRORISTS THREATEN TALKS

The activities of terrorist organisations in West Berlin, financed and controlled by the U. S. authorities, endanger the success of the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers East Germany Deputy Prime Minister Otto Nuschke (Christian Democrat) told a press conference in Berlin on January 11th.

"We have received information that the American secret service and the West German organisations allied with it are at present preparing a new attack on the German Democratic Republic" Herr Nuschke stated.

"Authentic information shows that this attack is planned for the beginning of 1954."

Herr Nuschke gave detailed information of some of the U. S. controlled terrorist organisations in West Berlin, and of crimes which they had committed in East Germany. (Details of some of these organisations are given on page 12 in this issue.)

"The aim of these terrorist acts is to undermine the democratic order in the German Democratic Republic, to sow hate and dissension amongst the German people, and to provoke a civil war in which German would fight German" he stated.

"We believe that a general cleaning up is necessary before the four foreign ministers come together in Berlin, and we demand that the United States of America should take the necessary steps immediately.

All honourable Germans expect that an end be put to the activity of these terror and espionage organisations, and that all hostile action against the German Democratic Republic cease."

I SAW FOR MYSELF

By Frau Gerda Schmidt

Gerda Schmidt (that is not her real name) works in the West German Ludwigshafen Soda and Aniline Factory. Last month she was member of a West German delegation which visited chemical factories in East Germany.

In West Germany they tell us stories about sinister commissars standing behind workers, driving them on to higher production. But we found that the demands on East German workers are actually not as high as those which West German workers on piece work have to meet.

Workers in the Leuna chemical works are better paid than we are. They get twenty-four days' holiday in the year, instead of the twelve which we get in the Ludwigshafen works. And gas workers get free milk at the works, but we have to pay for ours.

In East Germany women really get equal pay for equal work, whereas in the West women doing exactly the same work as men regularly get 30% less pay.

I talked with a war widow, who told me about her three sons, two of whom are already in high school. She pays no school fees for them, either — a thing which is unknown in the west.

I asked her how she manages with her housework and was astonished when she said she took a monthly household day off without losing any pay. And the creches and kindergartens, where young working mothers can send their children, are a regular thing in all bigger East German factories. These are almost unknown in West Germany.

We compared notes on sick benefit rates, too. In West Germany a trade union member who has paid his dues regularly for two years, for example at the rate of 3.60 marks per week, gets sick benefit of 60 pfennigs a day for six weeks. In East Germany, on the other hand, every trade union member gets a daily sick benefit of the same amount as his weekly trade union subscription, for as long as three months if necessary. This is over and above the generous sick pay from the government health service, of course.

It is really important for us in the West to get exact information about what goes on in the East German trade unions. We heard for the first time, for instance, that 40% of all trade union dues remains in the works, to pay for workers' holidays, sports clubs and cultural activities, such as libraries, cinemas, evening classes, folk art groups and so on.

In East Germany profits from increased production really benefit the workers themselves and do not disappear into private owners' pockets.

For instance, in the Buna Chemical Works there has been an increase in production of 252% since 1947; the average increase in wages since 1947 is 187% — from 2437 marks to 4553 marks per year — but that is not the only advantage the workers have got out of it.

We saw the 1,005 new flats for Buna workers which have been built since 1947, 399 of which were built out of works funds, and the big clubhouses which cost nearly two million marks, besides a fine new apprentices' training centre, a new club in the carbide factory, tennis courts and clubhouse, gymnasium and sports field.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Just under six years ago, on March 31st 1947, I had a macabre interview with a mass murderer who had just been sentenced to death. "Mass murderer" is really a very mild term, for this man, Rudolf Hoess, former commandant of the nazi extermination camp at Auschwitz, had been directly responsible for the deaths of millions.

Mass Murderer

I had the interview in Warsaw, where I was working as correspondent of Reuters News Agency of London. During the trial, which I attended, Hoess, wearing a worn but neatly pressed Wehrmacht uniform without insignia, sat quietly in the dock, answering the questions of the court intelligently and precisely. He certainly did not look or act like a mass murderer, though his answers to the questions put to him showed that he had been one.

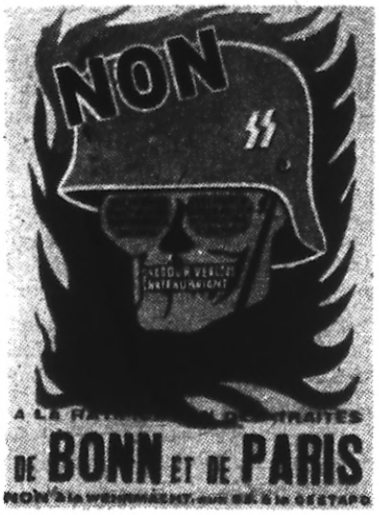
After sentence had been passed, and Hoess had politely asked the court's permission to write a farewell letter to his wife and to send her his wedding ring (the wedding rings were hacked from the fingers of the gassed bodies at Auschwitz, and went into the nazi war treasury), he was led out of the court room by two Polish guards.

Missionary

I button-holed the state prosecutor, on an impulse, and asked whether it would be possible to talk to Hoess. Rather to my surprise he led me to a little room at the back of the court where Hoess was waiting for the van which would take him away to the condemned cell.

I introduced myself to Hoess, who clicked his heels together and instinctively started to put out his hand to shake hands, only remembering at the last moment that I might not like to shake hands with a convicted murderer. At first he spoke rather shakily, but he soon pulled himself together and answered my questions in a clear voice.

"I fully admit my guilt for the Auschwitz killings" the stocky 47 year old man told me. "I cannot really feel sorry for it though, because at the time I committed the acts I was thoroughly convinced that I was doing the right thing."



"Say No! to the treaties of Bonn and Paris. Say No! to the Wehrmacht, the SS and the Gestapo" says this French poster. The eye sockets are filled with the names of the nazi extermination camps.

I asked Hoess, whose father had wanted him to become a missionary, what he would have done if his ideology and his Fuehrer had demanded that he send his own wife and children to the gas chamber. Without hesitation he replied: "If I had been ordered to gas and burn my wife and my five children I would have done it, of course. In this case I should probably have followed them by committing suicide."

Asked why he had not followed Hitler's example and killed himself when the nazi empire crumbled, Hoess, who had cheerfully gassed tens of thousands of Jewish, Polish and Russian children said: "I and my wife considered this, but we came to the conclusion that we could neither kill our innocent children, nor leave them all alone in the world."

I asked Hoess what he thought of his trial. "It seemed very fair to me, but there are a few points I should like to correct" he said.

Then, with bureaucratic thoroughness, Hoess took exception to the statement that he had killed four million people. "According to my calculations, the total cannot have been more than 1,500,000" he said.

"And one of the witnesses said that in a single night we gassed 80,000 people in Auschwitz. This was a demonstrably false statement. 80,000 people would have meant 40 train loads. We had a well-run marshalling yard at Auschwitz, but even the best goods marshalling yard could not deal with 40 trains in one night. My recollection is that we never gassed more than 20,000 people in one 24 hour period."

•

Hoess was taken back to the scene of his crimes at Auschwitz, and executed a few days later.

The basic task of the Berlin Conference seems to me to be the creation of a Germany which can never again let a man like Rudolf Hoess loose on the people of the world.

Footnote

A "German Soldiers' Calendar", full of pictures of German soldiers in action in World War Two, has been published in Munich, American Zone.

The calendar, which has a preface by Field Marshal von Manstein, features a picture of "brave German troops freeing oppressed Germans from the Polish yoke" when the Hitlerite Wehrmacht invaded Poland in September 1939.

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